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Patrick Plans for Opening Days of Gardening Season

By JUANITA BEARD

TOP of the morning to ye, and phat are the birdies a-saying to yez to-day?" called old Patrick, the gardner to a queer mummy-like figure in the corner of the garden. Faith, soon an' I'll be of a takin' that straw overcoat off from ye and ye'll be producin' the finest roses iver this summer! And 'twas only yisterday I did take the "covers" off from all the lilies and bulbs in the border and rake up all the old dead leaves—but not to burn like old George across the way was doing—I'm tellin' ye I save all that stuff for further use.

"Now let's see, where was I goin'?" Oh yes, right in here to the tool-house to see if everything is in tip-top shape for spring work. There are my pruning shears and knives and my good old saw. I'll never use that double edge saw again—it ruins the trees. There's the gas tar and liquid asphaltum for dressing wounds when I "doctor" the trees, and the green paint to brighten up the old wheelbarrow and the white paint to touch up the lattice fence.

"There's so much to do—guess I'll sit down here and make a memorandum.

"Miss Charlotte's favorite specimen trees must have the dead wood cut out and the branches shortened a bit to preserve their symmetry—I thought she said "cemetery" and wondered where it was. Better do this right away as soon as danger from winter is past and while the trees are still dormant. And I'll not forget to do it the way old George showed me. It's bad to leave a stump—make a clean cut at the base of the branch and parallel to the trunk of the tree, says he.

"I'll be pruning the Japanese barberry hedge next—can't do that too soon now if I want lots of berries. And then I won't have to touch it again 'til after the fruiting season. George says the privet hedge is better trimmed wider at the base than at the top, with the top a wee bit rounded.

"The summer-flowering shrubs will have to be pruned, too, before growth begins so as not to be winter killed.

"Then I must uncover those vines that I took down from the trellis and buried last fall, and let them lie uncovered about ten days before I tie them up again.

"Guess I'll do some spraying next. It could wait 'til summer but I did see signs of scale on some of the trees and a winter spray of nicotine sulphate will fix that. And I'll get some Bordeaux mixture or lime-sulfur to get rid of the rust and blight. Here's the piece I clipped from the paper today about "Spray Don'ts."



"There's so much to do—guess I'll sit down here and make a memorandum," said old Patrick, the gardener—and much there is to do in every garden with the coming of spring.

Don't wait for rose pests—spray first.

Don't destroy toads or birds—they save you lots of trouble with insects.

Don't use liquid sprays without keeping a uniform solution by means of agitating the liquid.

Don't whitewash your tree trunks; bugs are not afraid of whitewash.

Don't dust your evergreens—coniferous or broad-leaved, with lime; it injures them.

"So much for spraying, and next I must fix the lawn. I'll take away the coarse manure which was spread on last fall and work the fine manure into the lawn with a heavy roller. Must get some lawn seed to plant along about the first of April—any time from March 20 to the last of April will be alright. George said I'd need about a pound for every three hundred square feet and to use that mixture of sixteen parts by weight of Kentucky blue grass, four parts of recleaned red-top, and one part of white clover.

"Well, guess I'll be movin' now—been

settin' here quite a spell. I want to look over the garden catalogs tomorrow and get my orders made out for seeds and nursery stock.

"'Tis a great deal of fun I have, whin the little voices makes the humans listen to thim, and wirra, wirra, but 'tis sad I am when they will not hear, and the foine advice goes to waste, but I know there can be only one bad day at a time, and if it should rain, the next day may shine and the wonders of the ould day will still be around me in the children, the flowers, and the birds."

March

With rushing winds and gloomy skies
The dark and stubborn winter dies;
Far-off, unseen, Spring faintly cries,
Bidding her earliest child arise;
March!

—Bayard Taylor.